

Children’s Alexithymia Measure (CAM)

The Children’s Alexithymia Measure (CAM) is designed to be completed by a parent or other caregiver who has known the child for some time. The CAM was developed in a study of caregivers of children ages 5-17 (Way, Applegate, Cai, Kimball-Franck, Black-Pond, Yelsma, Roberts, Hyter, & Muliatt, 2010).

The concept of alexithymia has been defined various ways. Simply stated, it is a lack of words for feelings (Buchanan, Waterhouse, & West, 1980); more complexly stated, it is defined as having “difficulty identifying and describing feelings, difficulty distinguishing between feelings and bodily sensations, a lack of imaginative ability, and a focus on the external world rather than internal feelings” (Nemiah & Sifneos, 1970; Nemiah, Freyberger, & Sifneos, 1976; Marty & de M’Uzan, 1963, as cited in Hendryx, Haviland, & Shaw, 1991, pp. 227-228). The *Children’s Alexithymia Measure* has a unidimensional factor structure and measures difficulties expressing feelings.

Scoring directions: Add the score for each item, to obtain a total score.

Interpretation: Higher scores indicate increasing levels of behaviors associated with alexithymia.

The authors intend the CAM to be administered and interpreted by clinicians as a screening instrument to help guide treatment. It is expected that clinicians will use clinical judgment in interpreting CAM scores.

The reference for the CAM is:

Way, I., Applegate, B., Cai, X., Kimball-Franck, L., Black-Pond, C., Yelsma, P., Roberts, E., Hyter, Y., & Muliatt, M. (2010). Children’s Alexithymia Measure (CAM): A new instrument for screening difficulties with emotional expression. *Journal of Child and Adolescent Trauma*, 3, 303-318.

The *Children’s Alexithymia Measure (CAM)* research project was funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA #5 U79 SM56207) through a grant awarded to the Southwest Michigan Children’s Trauma Assessment Center (Western Michigan University) as a part of the National Child Traumatic Stress Initiative’s Collaborative Response to Traumatized Children. This instrument was developed by the authors and does not necessarily represent the views of SAMHSA or the NCTSN.

For additional questions about the administration, use, and scoring of the CAM please contact Dr. Ineke Way, School of Social Work, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, MI 49008
ineke.way@wmich.edu

Children's Alexithymia Measure (CAM)

Child's Name: _____ **Date:** _____
Birth Date: _____ **Gender:** _____
Completed by: _____ **Relationship to Child:** _____

Instructions: During the past three months, how often have you observed each of the following behaviors in _____ (*enter child's first name*). To assist you, it may be helpful to think of typical children of a similar age.

Please note: in this questionnaire, the words *feelings* and *emotions* have the same meaning.

	Almost never	Sometimes	Often	Almost always
1. When asked about how he/she is feeling, instead talks about what he/she has been doing	0	1	2	3
2. Has difficulty saying he/she feels sad even though he/she looks sad	0	1	2	3
3. Talks about unimportant things/topics instead of sharing his/her feelings	0	1	2	3
4. Has long periods of little or no emotional expression, interrupted by bursts of emotional expression	0	1	2	3
5. Has difficulty saying he/she is happy even though he/she looks happy	0	1	2	3
6. Physically removes self from situations when asked to talk about feelings	0	1	2	3
7. Makes up unrelated stories when asked about his/her feelings	0	1	2	3
8. Verbal expressions of feelings do not match non-verbal expressions of feelings	0	1	2	3
9. Changes the topic of conversation when asked about his/her feelings	0	1	2	3
10. Has difficulty naming his/her positive feelings (such as joy, happiness, excitement)	0	1	2	3
11. Says "forget it" or "leave me alone" when asked about his/her feelings	0	1	2	3
12. Has trouble finding words or getting words out when talking about his/her own feelings	0	1	2	3
13. Uses few words (may just say "good" / "bad") to describe most of his/her feelings	0	1	2	3
14. Says "I don't know" when asked why he/she is upset	0	1	2	3

Way, I., Applegate, B., Cai, X., Kimball-Franck, L., Black-Pond, C., Yelsma, P., Roberts, E., Hyter, Y., & Muliett, M. (2010).